

# Environmental Considerations in Planning: New Momentum

Environment Pre-Conference Workshop

TRB MPOs Present and Future Conference

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## Our Ideal Goal!



‘Momentum’ is building to encourage better linkages between transportation planning and NEPA

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## Examples of building momentum for today's talk:



- Planning and Environment Linkage concepts



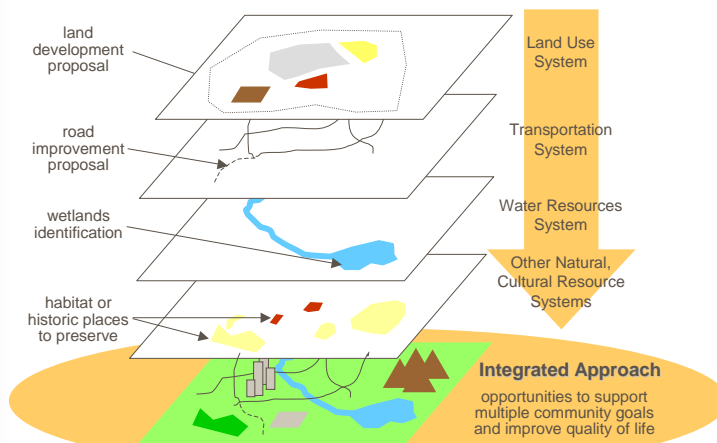
- Momentum is building:

- Relevant SAFETEA-LU Section 6001 requirements
- FHWA initiatives



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## Planning and Environment Linkages: An Integrated, Systems Perspective



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## Stronger Linkages: Connecting Decision Processes

### Transportation Systems Planning & Programming

- Project locations
- Conceptual design

### Transportation Project Development

- Environmental analysis and permitting
- Right-of-way
- Engineering design

### Resource Planning Processes

- Land use
- Watershed
- Habitat
- Cultural resources

### Resource Project-Level Decisions

- Water and wetland permitting
- Endangered Species consultations
- Historic Preservation process
- Development permitting

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## What Is Entailed? Some Examples

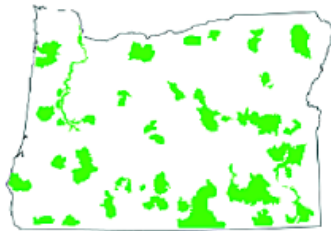
- Data and analysis tools
- Inter-agency coordination
- Decision process opportunities



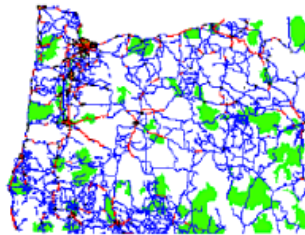
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## Data and Analysis Tools

- Geographic natural and cultural resource information for overlays and analysis in the planning process



Map A: Oregon's Conservation Opportunity Areas



Map B: Oregon's STIP Overlaid on Map of Conservation Opportunity Areas and Roads/Cities

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## Inter-Agency Coordination

- Engaging the agencies that will be involved in environmental analysis and permitting
- Documenting the planning process for resource agencies and other stakeholders
- Identifying appropriate ways for other agencies to be involved
- Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement to establish interactions, points of concurrence

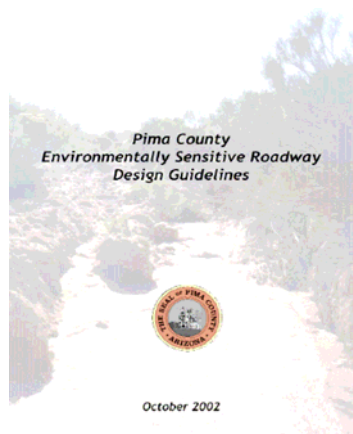


*Monarch  
Butterfly  
habitat example*

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## Decision Process Opportunities

- Creating 'hand-off' documents in planning that will be useful in project development
  - Purpose and need
  - Alternatives
  - Indirect and cumulative impacts
  - Mitigation opportunities
- Tiering of environmental analysis
- Design guidelines sensitive to environmental and/or social context of facilities



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## SAFETEA-LU Implications for Transportation Plans

- Some of these practices are now required
- Related Provisions: Section 6001
  - Consideration of environmental mitigation
  - Consultation with resource agencies
  - Consideration of resource maps and inventories
  - Participation Plans for input, including visualization techniques



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## SAFETEA-LU: Mitigation

- Mitigation Activities: In Long-Range Plans, discussion of
  - Types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out activities
  - “...including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan”
  - Developed in consultation with Federal, State, and tribal wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies

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## SAFETEA-LU: Consultation

- “MPOs shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation”
- Consultation shall involve, as appropriate:
  - Comparison of transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps
  - Comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources

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## SAFETEA-LU: Participation Plans

- Participation plan to be developed in consultation with all interested parties
- Reasonable opportunities to comment on contents of transportation plan
- Methods, to maximum extent practicable:
  - Accessible public meetings
  - Visualization techniques
  - Information electronically accessible, such as World Wide Web

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## You can do it! We can help... FHWA Initiatives



- Training and peer exchange events
  - Linking Planning and NEPA Workshops
  - Conservation and Transportation Planning Workshops
  - GIS Training
- Rules and guidance
  - Planning Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
  - Linking Planning & NEPA Guidance
  - NEPA Indirect & Cumulative Impacts

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## FHWA Initiatives (cont'd)



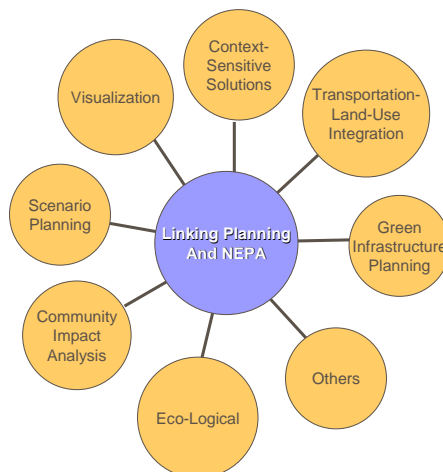
- Information resources
  - Planning and Environment Linkages website
  - Eco-Logical report
  - EO 13274 – Integrated Planning Work Group
  - Context Sensitive Solutions website
  - Scenario Planning website
  - Visualization website
  - Exemplary Ecosystems case studies



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## Everything Is Connected

Linking planning and NEPA ideas are related to previous and ongoing efforts



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## New FHWA Website on *Planning and Environment Linkages*

<http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/integ/index.asp>

- Overview of approach and concepts
- Tips on identifying activities to implement approach
- Descriptions of effective practices
- Links to other related information resources
- Related guidance, regulations, and SAFETEA-LU provisions

Help us build the knowledge base! Send comments, info to:

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or Micheal Culp, [michael.culp@dot.gov](mailto:michael.culp@dot.gov)

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## In Summary

- Goal: stronger linkages between planning and Environment
- Supported by SAFETEA-LU, rules, and guidance
- There are information resources available from FHWA and others to help

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